

Feature Story - Hume Learning Community Enable Social Enterprises - Renew Tech for Good Initiative

Learning Community Themes Addressed

- Bridging the digital divide/ learning with technology.
- Learning for and in the workplace.
- Fostering a culture of lifelong learning; inclusive learning; formal learning from K-12, post-secondary, higher education.
- Entrepreneurial learning; individual empowerment; learning for sustainable development (climate change), economic and cultural prosperity.
- Responds to COVID-19.

Background – About Enable

Enable is a leading and award-winning not for profit Social Enterprise on a mission to tackle disadvantage and the digital divide by connecting community, environment, and local economies.

Since 2015, Enable have supported hundreds of people from disadvantaged backgrounds to connect with community, environment, and improve their prospects of employment through innovative work and learning programs.



Enable operate commercially in the Computer decommissioning and recycling, warehousing, fulfilment and storage and Online Retailing sectors with 100% of the profits from trade re-invested to operate and support a total of nine (9) work and learning stations to support participants with skill-building, confidence, and career decision-making.

Enable program outcomes and issues addressed are best contextualized their overall periodical Impact Statements

Issues and Impact

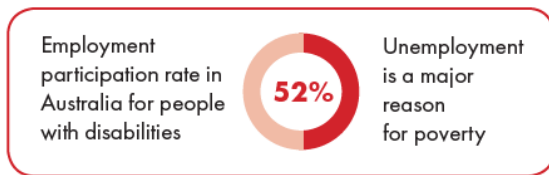
Enable, whilst a small not for profit and social enterprise have been delivering big on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015.

Enable's Impact Statement as at December 2019:

Issue 1: Poor employment participation rates of people with disability in Australia, with approximately 50% less likely to have a job. Unemployment is the major reason for poverty.

Impact: Delivered **31,550 hours of employability skills** to **855 participants** most likely to experience barriers to employment to improve their chances of getting work.

Delivering on UN SDG 1: Rights to a job, building resilience of disadvantaged and unemployed community, advocating for social enterprise in Australia as part of the eco-system to reduce barriers to employment for people with disability.



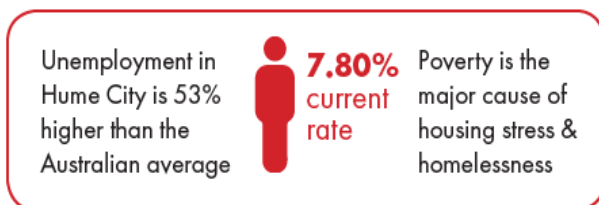
Our Impact

Delivered **31,550 hours** of employability skills to **855 participants** most likely to experience barriers to employment to improve job prospects. Social impact discount applied for disadvantaged community to access technology **\$1,125**.

Issue 2: High Unemployment in Hume (Melbourne's north), this is 53% higher than the Australian average. Poverty is the major cause of housing stress and homelessness.

Impact: Created **8,858 paid work hours** to support local economic development and **15 Employment Pathway outcomes** through Enable's enterprise trade, supporting local disadvantaged and economic development across Melbourne's north.

Delivering on SDG 8: Supporting local economic growth whilst promoting decent and full paid jobs for people who experience barriers to employment.



Created **8,858 paid work hours** and **15 Employment Pathway outcomes**; 4 referrals to further training, 5 casual and 6 part-time employment outcomes through Enable's enterprise trade, supporting local disadvantaged and economic development across Melbourne's north.

Issue 3: e-Waste is one the fastest growing waste types in Australia. There is a dire need to divert the 90% of e-waste currently going into landfill.

Impact: Diverted 184,9030kg of decommissioned technology from landfill through accredited recycling services with 100+ Customers

E-waste is one of the fastest growing types of waste. Zero waste strategies use less new raw materials and divert waste from landfill.



Our Impact

Diverted **184,903 kgs** of e-waste from landfill through accredited recycling and re-deployment services.

Toner recycling local collaboration laid **309km** of local road.

Issue 4: Cohesive communities create a sense of belonging. We create a platform for social inclusion to support and engage local disadvantaged community.

Impact: Enabled **13,252 Volunteer hours** to support social inclusion and cohesive communities.

Delivering on UN SD Goal 11: Creating a platform for community inclusion and a safe, inclusive, and accessible space for people with disability

Cohesive communities create a sense of belonging. We create a platform for social inclusion to support & engage local disadvantaged community.



Enabled **13,252 hours** of general public volunteering, supporting social inclusion and cohesive communities.

Enable Social Enterprises release yearly impact statements. For current report, please visit www.enableaustralia.org.au

COVID-19 and the Worsening Digital Divide

A key impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable Australians is the worsening of the digital divide. Older Australians, people with disability, people experiencing homelessness, low income and unemployed community need more than ever access to affordable technology to ensure they stay connected to family, friends, health, support and community workers.

In March 2020, Enable experienced a significant spike in demand for affordable tech and responded with a rudimentary and manual “over the phone and email” style ordering process. Distribution of the affordable items into community was resourced by shifting the focus of an already downsized workforce.

Fast forward to March 2021, Enable is tackling the worsening digital divide through the aptly named, [Renew Tech for Good](#) initiative.

The key design elements for the Renew Tech for Good initiative includes:

- (i) **Community need:** Digital inclusion. Assisting affordable technology needs to become accessible to disadvantaged communities to ensure those in need stay connected to family, friends, schools and community, health, employment services

More information on digital exclusion can be found at <https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/>
- (ii) **Community/Impact Partners:** This initiative builds upon Enable’s ethos of “collaborate, not duplicate” and seeks to engage Community Impact Partners, Councils, Education and Training sector, Associations and fellow not for profits through a Hub and spoke style distribution model.
- (iii) **An upgraded online platform** at www.intheclick.org.au Automated signs up and account management of community partners as well as administering Social Impact Discounts for buyers and recipients. Ongoing communications with prospective and active Impact partners will also be managed through the e-commerce system
- (iv) **Funding partners:** Both philanthropic and Local Council support was secured for the Renew Tech for Good initiative. Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation COVID-19 Response Fund supported by Paul Ramsay Foundation and the 2020 Hume City Council Quick Response Grant.
- (v) **Impact measurement:** In addition to Enable’s Impact reporting suite of social, environmental, and economic outcomes, the Renew Tech for Good outcomes will be measured as (i) affordable items distributed, (ii) community/impact partners engaged and (iii) Social Impact discounts applied.
- (vi) **Designed for growth:** This initiative was designed to be ***scalable and replicable to reach and support communities in need across Australia.***

A Social Enterprise Perspective

Enable, whilst being a not for profit, currently does not receive any form of government service provider funding, relying predominantly commercial income to deliver it’s social, environmental and local economic impact. Importantly, 100% of profits are redistributed into Enable’s Employability and Affordable Tech programs.

Enable's "collaborate, don't duplicate" ethos opens doors to innovation and partnerships that can (and do) tackle deep-seeded issues, noteworthy when contemplating outside the box thinking for relevant Policy discussions.

Contact person:

Julie McKay

Founder & Managing Director

Email: julie.mckay@enableaustralia.org.au

Further reference:

Thomas, J., et al. (2020). Measuring Australia's Digital Divide. The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020. RMIT and Swinburne University of Technology for Telstra. Retrieved from <https://digitalinclusionindex.org.au/the-index-report/report/>